DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 258 RC 011 692

TITLE Education of Migrant Workers' Children in the European Community.
INSTITUTION Commission des Communautes Europeennes (Luxembourg).
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Community Action; Culture Conflict; *Educational Problems; Elementary Secondary Education; International Organizations; Language Instruction; Migrant Children; *Migrant Education; Parent Education; *Parent School Relationship; *Second Language Learning; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Europe; *European Community

ABSTRACT

More than two million migrant children within the European community are under the age of 18, and because most are of school age, they must face the problem of fitting into different school systems. Among the obstacles are language barriers, strange environments, cultural differences, differences in school curricula, and home backgrounds in which the parents know little about the language or educational system of the host country and so are unable to help or advise their children. If a migrant child can attend nursery school, integration is natural and the new language can be learned within a year. For the older child, reception classes with specialized teachers and intensive teaching methods teach the new language as quickly as possible, and within one to two years he may switch to normal classes. Remedial instruction can assist him after that, if necessary. The child's native language and culture should be retained and included in his school curriculum. Teachers working in migrant areas should be trained to speak the children's language, to utilize rapid language-teaching methods, and to understand the educational, psychological, and socio-cultural problems of migrant children. The successful integration of migrant children is dependent upon schoolmates being prepared to meet them halfway in their efforts to become a part of the new community. A list of efforts by the European community and by international organizations to assist in the education of migrant children concludes this booklet. (DS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RC

Education of migrant workers' children in the European Community

ED178258

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ella Krucoff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RC011692

EUROPEAN DOCUMENTATION 2 school series periodical 1975/1

Education of migrant workers' children in the European Community

There are at present some 6 250 000 migrant workers living in the Community and well over 2 million of their children are under 18.

The majority of these children are of school age and are faced with the problem of fitting into different school systems. The most obvious obstacle facing them, and generally the most difficult to overcome, is language. Some migrant children don't suffer too much: Italian and Spanish children in French-speaking countries adapt very quickly, as do Commonwealth migrants in the United Kingdom. The vast majority, however, come up against a language barrier which not all manage to break down.

It is true that very young children, through constant contact with playmates, learn the new language very quickly and six- and seven-year-olds still stand some chance of integrating into a normal class without too much trouble. Children aged 8 and over, however, need special attention and, if they do not get extra language tuition, their future schooling may be jeopardized.

Moreover, in the first few years at a foreign school, the language handicap may prevent migrant children achieving the rewards to which they aspire. The result, particularly with adolescents, is discouragement which can be permanent.

And there are further difficulties. The psychological shock suffered by even the youngest children when transplanted to a strange environment must not be underestimated. Moreover, first contacts with a new social and school environment can be complicated if the migrant child is confronted with indifference, scorn or even hostility from new classmates.

To young Moslem, African and Asian migrants, European schools may present a social image which conflicts with religious beliefs and customs honoured in their own homes. These young people experience great difficulty in developing a cultural identity and there is a real danger they will remain on the fringes of both the old culture and the new.

Migrant children who have been to school before their families

emigrated have particular difficulty in integrating in a class of children of the same age and ability. The language problem, coupled with differences in school curricula, can set a child back one year at least. At secondary level, periods of study completed, and qualifications obtained abroad are often not recognized—either on arrival in the host country, or on return to the country of origin.

Finally, migrant children often have to cope with the additional problems presented by home backgrounds in which parents know little of either the language or educational system of the host country. These parents, who are often not well educated themselves and usually low down the social scale, are unable to help or advise their children and may, as a result, suffer from feelings of inadequacy or inferiority. This creates a bad educational climate which is often made worse by housing conditions that are rarely conducive to study.

Absenteeism, or indeed a downright refusal to attend school, is rife. The number of children involved varies from region to region and with the country of origin, but most of them tend to be adolescents approaching school leaving age. Often this is because their parents consider it unnecessary for them to remain at school when they had met the educational requirements in their country of origin, but in many cases it may well be that the poor quality of education provided makes many migrant children reluctant to attend school in the first place.

What can be done to help migrant children?

1. Pre-school education

A small child's first social contacts are very important. If all goes well in the early, formative years, then integration will present no further problems in the future.

However, if the migrant child has no opportunity to mix with children of his age in the host country and remains exclusively in the charge of his parents or relatives and neighbours of the same nationality, he will not be able to form the necessary relationships and learn the new language.

If, on the other hand, the migrant child can attend a nursery school, then integration into the new environment will be quite natural and the child will learn to speak and understand the new language within a year. After 2 or 3 years of nursery schooling the migrant child will be almost indistinguishable from his classmates and thereafter will attend school under the same conditions as nationals of a similar social and cultural background.

2. Reception classes

The aim of the reception class is to teach the migrant child the new language as quickly as possible so that he can be educated in the same way as nationals of his own age.

MIGRANT WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE COMMUNITY

Country of origin	Country of employment									EC (Total 1973)
	Belgium (average 1972)	Denmark (1 Jan. 1971)	Germany (end of January 1973)	France (31 Dec. 1972)	Ireland (1972)	Italy (average 1971)	Luxembourg (average 1972)	Netherlands (15 June 1972)	United Kingdom (1971 approximately)	
Belgium		974	11 000	25 000	50	539	6 500	23 162	13 500	74 000
Denmark	200		4 000	1 000	50	248		126	2 000	7 500
Germany F. R.	4 500	5 385		25 000	210	7 190	3 000	11 652	20 000	81 000
France	15 000	568	51 000		210	4 145	6 000	1 742	20 000	93 000
Ireland	100	50		1 000		300			470 000	471 000
Italy	86 000	672	409 689	230 000	500		11 000	9 506	121 000	858 000
Luxembourg	1 400		1 450	2 000	7	32			500	5 400
Netherlands	13 500	974	76 000	5 000	250	1 146	500		6 000	92 000
United Kingdom	5 000	2 962	19 000	10 000		4 500	100	3 285		46 000
EC	125 700	11 585	566 139	299 000	1 277	18 100	28 000	49 473	653 000	1 753 000
Spain	30 000		179 498	270 000		2 006	1 200	14 824	30 000	527 000
Greece	7 000		268 096	5 000		768		1 145	50 000	332 000
Yugoslavia	1 200	14 241	466 128	50 000		4 303	500	8 810	4 000	535 000
Portugal	3 500		69 099	380 000		631	8 000	2 513	5 000	469 000
Turkey	12 000		528 239	18 000		317		20 883	3 000	582 000
Algeria	3 000		2 000	450 000					600	456 000
Morocco	16 500		15 317	120 000				14 705	2 000	168 000
Tunisia	2 100	10 617	11 162	60 000					200	74 000
Other non-member countries	18 000		239 576	130 000		18 205	2 300	9 715	918 205	1 348 000
Total number from non member countries	93 000	24 858	1 779 115	1 483 000	843	26 030	12 000	72 095	1 013 005	4 491 000
TOTAL	219 000	36 443	2 345 254	1 782 000	2 120	44 130	40 000	121 568	1 666 005	6 244 000

Reception classes are taught by specialized teachers and there are never more than 15 children—preferably of the same age—in the class. The new language is taught by intensive methods, perfected by specialists and tested in practice. The migrant children join in with the other children for general activities such as games, recreation, singing, gymnastics and the like.

If social and linguistic integration is to be achieved without too much difficulty, reception classes should form part of a school complex in which the proportion of foreign pupils does not exceed 20 per cent. The reception period may vary from one to two years depending on the age of the children. Once the children have a sufficient grasp of the school's working language they can then be switched to normal classes.

Reception classes are quite common in Denmark and Germany and are now being introduced in France and Luxembourg. Experiments have also been carried out in Belgium.

Properly run, reception classes are more effective than any other method of "launching" migrant children into their new school environment.

3. Remedial classes.

Less-gifted children may need remedial teaching even after their integration into normal classes. This can be provided, as the need arises, for very small groups of children experiencing the same difficulties.

Remedial teaching is becoming more and more common in primary schools as a means of helping children with a handicap to keep up with their class and can easily be adapted to the needs of a migrant child experiencing problems with a new language where syntax and grammar difficulties abound.

4. Native language and cultural background studies

For years, research workers and educationalists in many countries have argued that it is essential for migrant children to retain or learn their native language. This is obviously essential for children who will eventually return to schools in their own country and for young people who return to take up employment at home after training abroad.

It is now recognized that a child's mother tongue plays an important role in the educational process and should not be allowed to lapse. Conceptualization, acquisition of another language, personality, development and family relations are all influenced by retention of the mother tongue. For this reason the language and culture of the country of origin deserve a place in curricula for migrant children. In the past this type of education tended to be given entirely outside school hours and its success depended for the most part on the motivation of the migrant

child and his parents. It became clear, however, that this out-of-school system led to strain and was inappropriate for workers' children.

Educationalists, psychologists and linguists now insist that the mother tongue be considered as part of the normal school curriculum, although until such time as all children take a foreign language at primary school, it will be difficult to find 4 or 5 hours in the timetable without encroaching upon other subjects. In secondary schools, however, there is no reason why the migrant child should not study his mother tongue as his first foreign language.

In Germany, migrant children are already being taught their mother tongue at primary and secondary level and reforms are envisaged in other countries.

5. Active participation in school life

Although the presence of foreign children in a school can pose problems, it also creates a bilingual and bicultural environment from which the school can profit. The European Schools and other experiments have shown that the first foreign language can play an active role in teaching, and children exposed to bilingual teaching from the beginning of primary school to the end of secondary school acquire a perfect command of both languages.

How should teachers be trained?

It is essential that teachers intending to work in immigrant areas should be trained to know how to deal with migrant children. This is already being done in some countries, where conferences and lectures are given by psychologists and sociologists, heads of reception centres, social workers and trade unionists.

It is also a considerable help if teachers are trained in the use of audio-visual and other rapid language-teaching methods, for this allows them to adapt better to foreign pupils who must be taught in a language other than their mother tongue.

A teacher with a command of his pupil's mother tongue will obviously be more effective as a teacher, so trainee teachers who wish to specialize in teaching foreign children should be given an opportunity during their initial training of learning another language.

For those teachers already working, further training can be provided by organising three- or four-day courses to familiarise them with the educational, psychological and socio-cultural problems of migrant children. In addition, longer courses lasting from 3 to 6 weeks can be provided for teachers specializing in reception classes. These courses would include practical training in language-teaching methods, together

with in-depth lectures on the psychology, culture and religion of the children who will be placed in their charge.

Finally, as no host country now has enough qualified teachers to provide courses in all languages spoken by migrants, the help of foreign teachers should be enlisted. Experience in Germany has shown that this is perfectly feasible even where large numbers of foreign teachers are required.

How should parents be provided with information?

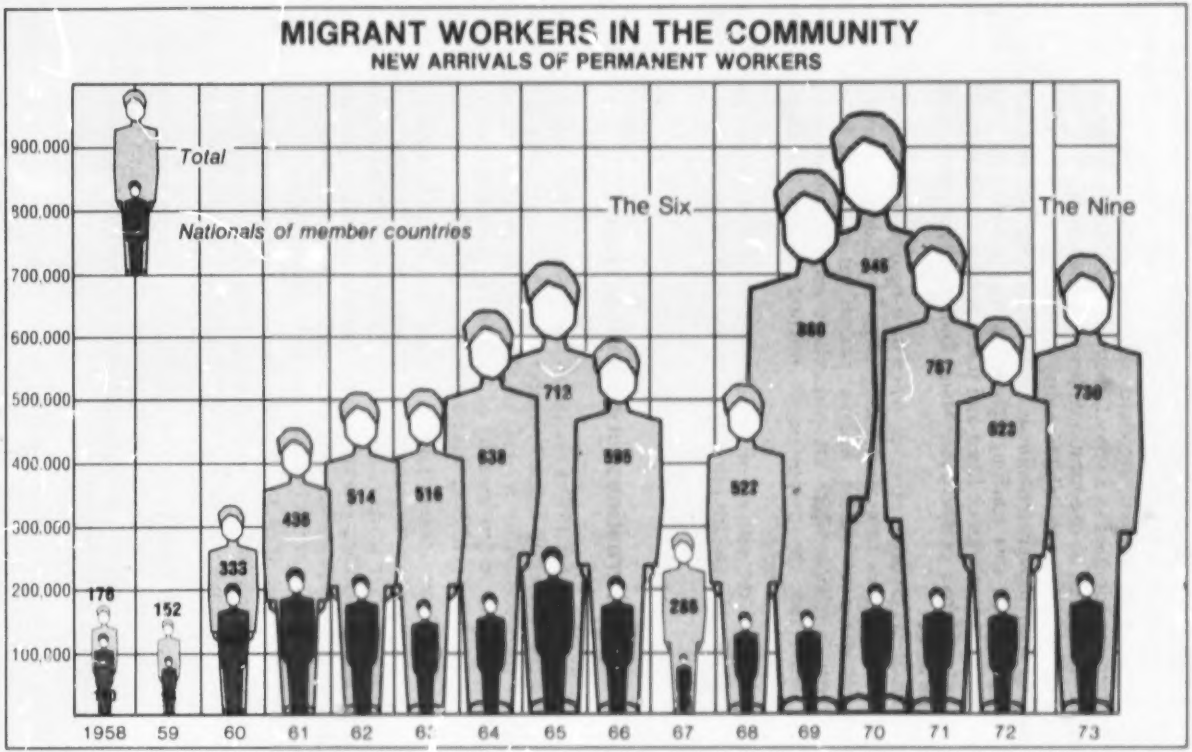
Migrant workers learn of their rights and duties through a host of different channels including government emigration and immigration agencies, local and regional reception committees, local councils and advisory bodies, migrants' associations, trade union organisations, churches, social services and employers.

On the educational front, however, parents tend to be poorly informed and fail to appreciate the opportunities for social advancement available to their children through the educational system of the host country. They should, therefore, be made aware of these opportunities before they emigrate. Responsibility for this lies partly with the country of origin, and partly with the emigration agencies involved. Documentation supplied to the would-be emigrant should contain information comparing educational facilities in the host country with those in the country of origin, together with detailed explanations of schooling arrangements for children and adolescents. Radio and television programmes could provide an effective follow-up to this information.

It will still, however, be difficult for school authorities to establish and maintain contact with migrant families and it will be up to those people working with these families to persuade parents to make use of school guidance services in their children's interest.

Improving the new environment

It is not enough for the mass media to try to build bridges between migrants and the rest of the community and efforts should be made to make migrants welcome at all levels of social life. School is one place where this can be done, but efforts to integrate migrant children depend for their success on schoolmates being prepared to meet them half-way. Some school subjects such as geography, history and economics offer many opportunities for teachers to explain the role of past migrations in the development of Europe and to place present-day migrations in their social, political and economic context.


MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE COMMUNITY
NEW ARRIVALS OF PERMANENT WORKERS
Total
Nationals of member countries
The Six
The Nine
900.000
800.000
700.000
600.000
500.000
400.000
300.000
200.000
100.000
178
152
333
438
514
516
638
713
595
286
522
880
946
767
623
730
1958
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73

In some host countries parents have expressed fears that the presence of foreign children in schools will result in lower educational standards. If, as has already been suggested, no more than 20 per cent foreign children are admitted to a school, their presence, far from being a threat to standards, can be of educational benefit to nationals.

For example, many children and adolescents are very successful in helping their foreign schoolmates with homework and in class and for young children this teaching activity is highly formative. With older children, contact with children and teachers from another country opens up wider human perspectives. Many find this helps them in their language studies.

Problems do arise, however, when over-rigid administrations prevent school authorities from distributing migrant children between different schools in a given locality. Migrant parents naturally tend to send their children to schools which are particularly good at integration and this can mean that the proportion of migrant children in such schools increases alarmingly.

All in all the settling of foreign workers in a town or region is a complex problem which can only be solved with the cooperation of many authorities.

What are international organisations doing?

1. In November 1972 a resolution was passed at the Unesco General Conference urging all Unesco members to take concrete steps to facilitate access to education for migrant children and to improve the quality of this education. A first meeting of experts on the education of migrant workers and their children was held in Paris in October 1973.

2. The International Labour Office has adopted numerous conventions and recommendations dealing with equal opportunity and treatment for migrant workers and access for their children to educational institutions, including general, technical and vocational education, school and vocational guidance and vocational training (cf. 56th, 57th, 59th and 60th sessions of the International Labour Conference).

3. The Council of Europe has passed its resolution (70)35 on the education of migrant children which has given rise to a number of studies and pilot schemes and has led to positive action being taken in most host countries.

At their 7th Conference, held in Brussels in June 1971, Ministers of Education from the 21 signatory States to the European Cultural Convention agreed to devote special attention to the problems posed by the education of migrant children.

In addition, delegates to the *ad hoc* Conference on the Education of Migrants held in Strasbourg last November passed a series of resolutions

urging the adoption of measures to streamline the organisation of facilities for migrant children from the educational and administrative point of view.

The Conference also emphasised the need for special reception measures and the importance of the mother tongue in the educational process. Countries affected by migration were urged to initiate and promote research into the problems posed by the education of migrant children.

What is the European Community doing?

1. Free movement within the Community is a fundamental right enjoyed by all Community nationals and their families. Conditions governing this free movement are laid down in EEC Regulation 1612/68 (see *O.J.* L 257, 19 October 1968). Article 7 of this regulation prescribes that "workers who are nationals of a Member State shall, by virtue of the same right and under the same conditions as national workers, have access to training and vocational schools and retraining centres." Article 12 continues, "the children of a national of a Member State who is or has been employed in the territory of another Member State shall be admitted to that State's general educational, apprenticeship and vocational training courses under the same conditions as the nationals of that State, if such children are residing in its territory," and that "Member States shall encourage all efforts to enable such children to attend these courses under the best possible conditions." A recent ruling by the EEC Court of Justice (Case 9/74) held that Article 12 applies not only to rules on admission but also to general measures, including grants etc., to facilitate attendance.

This Regulation also provided for the creation of an Advisory Committee for the free movement of workers (Articles 24-31) which has the job of providing, at the request of the Commission or on its own initiative, reasoned opinions on vocational training and all forms of assistance to workers and their families.

2. The social action programme adopted by the Council of Ministers in January last year lists as one of its priorities the creation of an action programme for migrant workers and their families. Among other things this programme would deal with training and education of migrant workers' children (*O.J.* C 13, 12 February 1974).

3. In fact, the social action programme does not discriminate between intra-Community migrant workers and migrants from third countries whereas Regulation 1612/18 only applies to Community nationals. When the nine EEC Education Ministers met in June 1974, they listed as a priority in their resolution on co-ordination in the field of education better facilities for the education and training of nationals of member and non-member countries and their children.

4. As a preliminary to positive action to improve educational conditions for migrant children in the Community, the Commission will attempt to get Member States to agree on a number of fundamental principles. These are as follows:

— the migrant child is entitled to education tailored to his needs;

— special teaching should be provided to help the child integrate into the school and social environment of the host country;

— the child's native language and native culture should have a place in the school curriculum;

— reintegration into the school system of the child's country of origin should be possible;

— there should be no discrimination between Community and non-Community nationals as regards schooling.

5. The Commission considers a number of concrete suggestions for action in the social and educational fields:

— increasing the number of reception or adaptation classes for children who migrate between the ages of 6 and 16 years;

— improvement of teaching methods and provision of special educational material for migrant children;

— arrangements to allow migrant children to study their native language and learn about their cultural background during normal school hours;

— arrangements to allow the reintegration of migrant children into the school system in their country of origin;

— training of teachers specializing in the education of migrant children;

— recruitment of foreign teachers capable of teaching migrant children their native language and explaining their cultural background to them;

— revision of national regulations on study grants to give migrant children access to all levels of education under the same conditions as nationals;

— extending the activities of social workers to ensure that migrant children do in fact attend school and that out-of-school activities are organised along more appropriate lines;

— encouraging bilateral and multilateral agreements between individual host countries and countries of origin in order to increase co-operation in educational matters—particularly in the recruitment and training of specialised teachers.

The Community Statistical Office is at the moment producing statistics on the number of foreign pupils, by nationality and by educational category, in Community schools. (Not all Member States produce statistics on this subject.) In more general terms, the Commission is in favour

of furthering studies and research projects calculated to lead to better understanding of the problems posed by the education of migrant children. The Commission will do all it can to support pilot schemes related to the education of migrant children and the training of specialised teachers.

As a result of decisions taken by the EEC Social Affairs Ministers in June 1974, the Commission is now able to guarantee aid from the European Social Fund for expenditure incurred in organising special courses geared to the needs of migrant children.

The Social Fund can also foot part of the bill for training schemes for social workers and teachers entrusted with the education of migrant children. The Fund can repay up to half the cost of schemes organised by public or private bodies under the conditions and within the limits fixed by existing regulations.

In implementing its programme for migrants, the Commission hopes to be able to count on the assistance of a working party set up within the Advisory Committee for the free movement of workers. It will also draw on the advice of experts in the field of migrant education and in social assistance to migrant families. The Commission will also consult representatives of teachers' organisations and migrants' associations.

Bibliography

A detailed bibliography, classified by country, will be found in a Council of Europe document which deals with this problem in a broader context: Standing conference of European Ministers of Education: *Ad hoc* conference on the education of migrants, Strasbourg, 5-8 November 1974, country reports. Documentation Centre for Education in Europe CME/HF-M(74)V.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - INFORMATION

Commission of the European Communities, 200, rue de la Loi, B-1049 Bruxelles.

Information offices

DUBLIN: 29 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, tel. 7o0353.

LONDON: 20 Kensington Palace Gardens,
London W8 4 QQ, tel. 727 8090.

WASHINGTON: 2100 M. Street, N.W.
Suite 707, Washington DC 20037-USA,
tel. 202-872 8350.

Sales offices

IRELAND: Stationery Office,
The Controller, Beggar's Bush, Dublin 4,
tel. 76 54 01.

UNITED KINGDOM: H.M. Stationery
Office P.O. Box 569, London S.E. 1,
tel. 928 6977, ext. 365.

OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,
tel. 49 00 81, case postale 1003, Luxembourg.

Price: £ 0.25, Lit 340, FB 20, Dkr 3.10, FF 2.50, DM 1.40, *f* 1.40.